

CHAPTER TWO

INFORMATION FOR VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICERS

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1. The Voting Assistance Officer and the Service/Agency/ Organization Voting Assistance Program

The *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA* - See Appendix A.) requires each Federal department and agency with personnel covered by the *UOCAVA* to have a voting assistance program. FVAP's biennial Voting Action Plan and the Department of Defense Directive 1000.4 (available at www.fvap.gov) establish policy and guidelines for carrying out an effective voting assistance program.

Civilian and Military Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) are critical to the success of these programs as are those programs carried out by volunteers in organizations of U.S. citizens overseas. These individuals, both military and civilian, are responsible for providing accurate nonpartisan voting information and assistance to all of the citizens they help. They aid in ensuring that citizens understand their voting rights and how to register and vote absentee under the *UOCAVA*.

The U.S. Uniformed Services have an extensive chain-of-command which provides support for their VAOs. The Department of State offers voting assistance through its Embassy and Consulate VAOs to all U.S. citizens outside the United States. In addition, many U.S. citizen organizations and corporations outside the United States designate and support VAOs to assist their members, employees and other U.S. citizens living abroad.

This first section provides guidance for VAOs on the performance of their duties and on carrying out a successful Service, agency or organization voting assistance program.

A. The Absentee Voting Process

The absentee voting process permits citizens covered by the *UOCAVA*, who will be away from their local polling places on election day, to vote through the mail or an alternative method. Absentee voters should request their ballots at least 60 days before the election whenever possible to allow enough by-mail transit time.

- First a person must register to vote in his/her state of legal residence (See Section 2). In order to register and/or vote absentee, an eligible U.S. citizen must carefully, legibly and accurately complete a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA - See Section 5) and submit it to the proper election official. State-specific instructions for completing the FPCA are contained in Chapter 3.
- Second, the local election official, once receiving the form, will process the FPCA to determine if the citizen meets the jurisdiction's residency requirements. The local election official will contact the citizen if there

are any questions during the process, or if the form is not acceptable. For this reason, it is critical to provide an email address and other contact information on the FPCA.

- When the citizen receives the ballot, it should be voted and returned as soon as possible to ensure the state's ballot receipt deadline is met.

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B. How to Implement a Voting Assistance Plan

The Military and Embassy/Consulate Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) has the important responsibility of providing accurate, nonpartisan voting information and assistance to the individual who wants to register and vote. The effectiveness of a VAO determines whether a citizen will understand how to participate in the process. Each VAO can accomplish his/her voting assistance plan by holding informational classes and informal discussions concerning voting and the responsibilities of a concerned citizenry.

When developing a local voting assistance plan, the VAO should consider the following:

- Visit the FVAP's website at www.fvap.gov.
- Help U.S. citizens to register and obtain a ballot.
- Encourage them to learn about the candidates, the issues and to vote.
- Distribute all voting materials and information in a timely manner.
- Make certain you have at least four cardstock FPCAs for each person for whom you are responsible. This will provide a sufficient supply to cover eligible family members, changes of address, deployments and new arrivals to your section of responsibility.
- Make certain you have at least one Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB - See Section 6) for each person you are responsible for.
- Hold a voting information briefing or voter registration drive for the citizens you are responsible for assisting.
- Coordinate activities for Overseas Citizens' Voters' Week (July 2-8, 2006), Armed Forces Voters Week (Military - September 3-9, 2006) and Absentee Voting Week (October 8-14, 2006).
- Display the 2006 Election Dates poster, and put your name, telephone number and email address on the

bottom. In addition, display motivational posters with your contact information.

- Get the FVAP voting news releases and distribute this information widely. To subscribe, email request to vote@fvap.ncr.gov.
- Make use of the valuable information available to you in the *Voting Information News* and make it available to others. Extract information from this newsletter and make it available to your local media for coverage. FVAP highly encourages the duplication and redistribution of the newsletter. To subscribe, email request to vote@fvap.ncr.gov.
- Make contact with younger citizens (18 - 24 year age-group) in your voting assistance program. This group has statistically shown lower voter participation. Don't forget shift workers. If you are an overseas VAO, include American organizations, associations and corporations in your absentee voting activities. If you are a military VAO, include tenant organizations, especially National Guard and Reserve. Also, remember to include clubs and organizations which family members may belong to.

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- Encourage use of the DoD Voting Information Center.
- Download, duplicate and circulate copies of the FVAP pamphlet titled, *How To Do It! Vote Absentee* or *"Frequently Asked Questions"* from the FVAP website.
- Utilize the motivational Get Out The Vote Public Service Announcements in print, audio and video format in local media. Contact FVAP for copies.
- Use the Ombudsman Service when necessary. If you cannot find answers locally or through your Service Voting Action Officer, contact FVAP.
- Attend a local FVAP workshop and become familiar with the military or civilian on-line training (slide presentation) at www.fvap.gov for advice and suggestions. VAO training is available online from the FVAP website (select "Voting Assistance Information"). VAO training is also available on CD-ROM. Contact FVAP for copies.
- Become familiar with the FVAP website, especially with the "Voting Assistance Information" site for additional resources for VAOs and citizens you assist.

- Send your best practice(s), novel ideas and lessons learned to your Department of State or Service Voting Action Officer. Contact information available in the Introduction of this *Guide*.

C. The Scope of a Civilian Voting Assistance Plan

Many U.S. citizen organizations and corporations outside the U.S. have designated a VAO for a two-year tenure. This VAO will serve as the organization's primary point of contact to work with the FVAP to carry out an effective voting assistance effort for the 2006-07 election years, and if so designated, for future election years.

The FVAP will provide the necessary materials for organizing and directing the organization's voting assistance program. Those materials include: a 2006-07 Voting Action and Information Support Plan outlining a schedule of action for the election year and a Voting Assistance Kit which contains all the essential materials for an effective voting assistance program.

VAOs will also receive FVAP voting news releases and the monthly *Voting Information News*.

VAO's responsibilities include:

- Expanding citizen outreach within the local community to include direct contact with civic groups, American Chambers of Commerce, colleges and universities, and similar organizations of U.S. citizens.
- Serving as coordinator for FVAP on-site workshops.
- Planning and ensuring that overseas U.S. citizens, including eligible family members, are informed of current registration and voting procedures and the importance of participating in the democratic process.
- Conducting non-partisan voter registration drives. Overseas Citizens' Voters' Week, July 2 through July 8, 2006 is an excellent time to get the word out, as U.S. citizens gather for Independence Day activities.
- Ensuring in-hand delivery of FPCAs to overseas U.S. citizens not later than August 15, 2006.
- Announcing through various media during Absentee Voting Week (October 8-14, 2006) that voters should return their voted ballot immediately upon receiving it. If overseas voters have not received their requested regular state ballot during this week they should use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB - See Section 6).
- Submitting a summary to the Director, FVAP, not later than December 2006, on the voter outreach efforts conducted during the election year, including best practices, and lessons learned (See Section 1.G).

D. The Scope of a Military Installation Voting Assistance Plan

Each Commanding Officer (CO) has the overall responsibility for the operation of a successful voting assistance program within the command. Usually, the CO will appoint an officer to act as Installation Voting Assistance Officer (IVAO) to organize and direct the installation's voting assistance program. The command's VAO will ensure that each subordinate unit and organization appoints, in writing, an officer, senior civilian employee or non-commissioned officer to organize and direct voting assistance activities within each unit or organization.

COs should conduct orientation briefings with unit VAOs prior to the start of primary elections. These briefings are intended to prepare unit VAOs for their duties and to ensure that voting assistance materials are on hand prior to the commencement of the 2006-07 command voting assistance program.

VAOs should have sufficient amounts of absentee voting forms (FPCAs and FWABs) available for each member of the organization and their voting-age dependents. (See "Publications, Supply or Distribution Officer" below and Section 5 and 6.)

In addition, the CO is required to plan and ensure that briefings of military personnel, their eligible family members, and civilian employees in overseas locations, and their eligible family members, are scheduled at the installation and/or unit level. The briefings should inform these individuals of current registration and voting procedures and the importance of voting.

The FVAP biennial Voting Action Plan and the Department of Defense Directive 1000.4 establish policy and guidelines for carrying out an effective voting assistance program.

The following officials are involved in carrying out the voting assistance program:

- **Commanding Officer** — The CO must emphasize the voting program in staff meetings, other command meetings, briefings and daily communications with those on the installation. He or she must communicate support of the program and encourage staff participation and involvement throughout the command.
- **Installation Voting Assistance Officer** — IVAOs should act as a focal point on military installations in coordinating voting assistance support on their installation. IVAOs should maintain a roster of all unit VAOs on the installation (including tenant organizations), establish communications with these VAOs and provide necessary materials and support.
- **Unit Voting Assistance Officers** — VAOs have an opportunity to personalize a command's voting assistance efforts. Success of a voting assistance program in any election year may well depend upon

the availability and quality of service that unit Voting Assistance Officers provide their personnel and their family members.

- **Legal Assistance Officer** — Legal questions which cannot be answered by the unit VAO should be referred to the command's legal staff.
- **Public Affairs/Information Officer** — This officer ensures that voting information is included in installation or unit publications such as newspapers, newsletters, daily bulletins, other printed media, where applicable, and Armed Forces Radio and Television Service. The Public Affairs Officer and the VAO should coordinate the activities for Armed Forces Voters Week (September 3-9, 2006) and Absentee Voting Week (October 8-14, 2006).
- **Inspector General (IG)** — The IG, acting on behalf of the CO, has an interest in any program which concerns the rights of personnel and family members and helps to ensure that VAOs are trained and equipped to give assistance to citizens in the command. The IG is required by Federal law to periodically review, organization voting assistance programs to ensure compliance with DoD and Service directives and regulations.
- **Personnel/Human Resources Officer** — This officer should ensure that all newly reporting personnel are provided FPCAs and VAO assistance in submitting change of address information to their local election office.
- **Chaplain** — As a respected member and leader in the military community, the chaplain can be of help in disseminating reminders and information to members of the community.
- **Publications, Supply or Distribution Officer** — This officer ensures that installation and tenant unit VAOs receive copies of this *Guide* and other voting program informational materials. These materials include Federal absentee voting forms. Sufficient amounts of FPCAs and FWABs should be available for each member of the organization/unit, their voting-age dependents, new personnel, and to use as change of address form for personnel that relocate or deploy. As a rule, order four FPCAs and one FWAB for each person in the unit. (See Section 5 and 6.)

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In addition to normal distribution of informational material, the FVAP may disseminate additional voting materials throughout the election year. It is essential

that distribution officers notify VAOs immediately upon receipt of these items.

- **Officers-in-Charge** — VAOs should contact Officers in charge of exchanges, commissaries, special services activities, medical and dental facilities, education centers, family centers, etc., to coordinate the display of voting information materials and for participation in Armed Forces Voters Week activities (September 3-9, 2006) and Absentee Voters Week (October 8-14, 2006).
 - **Installation Telephone Supervisor** — The VAO should ensure that the installation Voting Assistance Officer's name, location, and phone number are known to the telephone operators so that inquiries regarding voting assistance may be referred to the appropriate person.
- In addition to these officials, a resourceful VAO will make use of the many organizations that perform local service functions such as:
- **Spouses' Club** — This organization performs many service functions for the community and is always responsive to worthy community projects.
 - **Boy/Girl Scouts, and Other Youth Groups** — These organizations carry out numerous citizenship-oriented service projects. Contact the installation officer who serves as the local scout leader.
 - **Veterans and Service Organizations** — The Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Non-commissioned Officers Association and the League of Women Voters are typical of organizations that perform important community services and are eager to be of assistance. Contact local leaders.

E. Providing Information on Candidates

Voting motivation programs should encourage people to register and vote and inform them that voting is a civic responsibility rather than a legal obligation.

It is the Voting Assistance Officer's responsibility to inform the citizen about the procedures to follow in order to register and vote. It is the citizen's responsibility to obtain information about candidates and issues.

Some of the best sources for citizens to obtain such information are the world wide web, hometown and national newspapers, magazines, radio and television, and information obtained directly from the political party and campaign committee offices supporting a particular political candidate or proposal. English language newspapers and periodicals published overseas may also include information about candidates and issues. Many State Election Sites (links available from the FVAP website) also provide information on candidates.

Other sources of information about elections and candidates for members of the military and their family members include Armed Forces Radio and Television Service

(AFRTS), *Stars and Stripes*, the American Forces Information Service (AFIS), as well as newspaper articles and features distributed for military editors and used by the American Forces Press and Publications Service (AFPPS).

The two major political parties in the United States (Democratic and Republican) have organized groups in many countries throughout the world. Further information concerning overseas political activities by either party may be obtained by contacting their umbrella organizations:

Democrats Abroad

430 South Capitol Street, S.E.

Washington, DC 20003

Phone: (202) 863-8103

Fax: (202) 863-8063

Website: www.democratsabroad.org

E-mail: info@democratsabroad.org

Republicans Abroad International

1275 K Street, NW, Suite 102

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 608-1423

Fax: (202) 608-1431

Website:

www.republicansabroad.com

E-mail: mail@republicansabroad.org

These and other groups of U.S. citizens provide anyone with non-partisan registration and voting assistance and can be contacted through the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov.

F. Military and Federal Agency VAO Restrictions on Distributing Partisan Information

The VAO must not provide partisan information on candidates and issues to civilians, military personnel or their family members, but may refer citizens to the above sources of information. Further, VAOs are not to distribute any literature from candidates or partisan organizations. Organizations become partisan when they endorse or imply endorsement of candidates or identify with issues in a campaign. Military VAOs should contact the FVAP and also obtain the Commanding Officer's approval before distributing literature from any outside organization.

The Department of Defense's policy regarding the maintenance of political neutrality is stated in DoD Directive 5410.18:

"The Armed Forces and the Defense Establishment belong to all the American people... Department of Defense support of and participation in events and activities in the civilian domain will reflect that fact... [and such] support and participation must not directly or indirectly (a) endorse or selectively benefit or favor, or appear to endorse or selectively benefit or favor any private individual, group, corporation (whether profit or nonprofit), religion, sect or sectarian group, quasi-religious or ideological movement, fraternal organization, political organization, or

commercial venture, or (b) be associated with the solicitation of votes in a political election.”

Military VAOs should also refer to DoD Directive 1344.10 “Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces on Active Duty”. Directives are available online at www.fvap.gov. VAOs should report any irregularities in the voting process to their department or agency headquarters VAO.

Federally employed VAOs should refer to “Guidelines for Persons Providing Voter Assistance to American Citizens Overseas” and the Hatch Act, Title 5 U.S.C. Sec. 7321, which are available at www.fvap.gov. Citizens should bring problems encountered in the voting process to the attention of the Embassy or Consulate Voting Assistance Officers. If a problem cannot be resolved locally, then contact the FVAP.

G. Collecting and Sharing Best Practices and Lessons Learned

The FVAP Best Practices Program supports developing, collecting, sharing and implementing VAO’s best practices and lessons learned worldwide. The objective of the program is to enhance lines of communication among VAOs at all levels to facilitate global sharing of best practices and lessons learned while enabling tailored local best practices based on organizational voting assistance programs and lessons learned from successes and mistakes.

As you provide absentee voting assistance, look at your voting assistance program. You will find that there are some things you are doing very well with excellent results that others could use to improve awareness and participation among UOCAVA citizens. Make note of these activities, processes or procedures, and send them up the chain or to your Service Voting Action Officer (contact information on page 1, Introduction) using the guidelines provided here.

The Best Practices Report from each of the Services are displayed on the FVAP website. Best practices and lessons learned are disseminated through the *Voting Information News*.

The FVAP strongly encourages voting assistance personnel to make suggestions for “best practices” to include improvements to absentee voting procedures, this *Guide*, and other FVAP materials.

Guidance for Submitting Best Practices and Lessons Learned

VAO sources of information used to generate best practices and lessons learned may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Personal experiences as a VAO
- Assessments, audits and appraisals

- Training evaluations
- Operational Readiness Reviews
- Critiques, analysis and investigations
- Process improvement initiatives
- VAO training
- Voting activities such as registration drives

A best practice or lessons learned should contain four basic elements:

- A clear statement of the practice or lesson
- A background summary of how the practice was developed or the lesson was learned
- Benefits of using the practice or lesson (improvements, accomplishments...) and suggestion how the practice or lesson may be used in the future
- Contact information for additional detail

Uniformed Services Installation and U.S. Embassies and Consulates’ VAOs should submit best practices and lessons learned through email to their Service Voting Action Officer (SVAO). Overseas citizen organization VAOs and individuals may submit their best practices directly to the FVAP via email, vote@fvap.ncr.gov. For additional information on guidelines for submitting best practices and lessons learned, please visit the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov.

H. Post Election Survey

The FVAP conducts periodic surveys of voting assistance personnel and is required by law to submit a report to the President and Congress. The surveys are designed to measure the effectiveness of the voting assistance program and the availability and use of informational support materials at any given time during the election year. Voting assistance personnel are encouraged to discuss any aspect of the program with the FVAP at any time.

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2. Requirements for Voting and Establishing Voting Residence

A. Citizenship and Age

All states and territories prescribe two voter requirements:

- A voter must be a citizen of the United States on the date of the election in which he or she wishes to vote; and
- A voter must be at least 18 years old on election day in order to vote. Some states permit a 17-year-old to vote in primary elections if he or she will be 18 by the date of the general election.

B. Voting Residence

The issue of voting residence can be complex, depending on individual circumstances. Even in states where laws clearly define criteria for determining a person's voting residence, the final determination is generally up to each local election official. Providing as much information as possible to these officials on the FPCA is critical to successful registration and ballot request.

The *UOCAVA* (See Appendix A) allows citizens outside the United States (not affiliated with the Uniformed Services) to vote in the state or territory where they last resided immediately prior to departing the United States, even if many years have elapsed, and the voter maintains no residence in the state or territory, and the intent to return to that state or territory may not be certain.

For members of the Uniformed Services and their family members, in most states the legal voting residence is defined as where they have, or have had, physical presence at the location and, the intent to remain or return.

If a citizen is uncertain about his or her current legal voting residence, the citizen should examine his or her connections or ties to the state or territory in question and consult with legal counsel. Further, voting assistance personnel advising citizens of their proper voting residence or registration status should consult legal counsel.

C. Questions to Help Determine Correct Voting Residence

The following questions may aid voting assistance personnel in advising citizens on voting residence:

- Where have you registered to vote?
- Where have you voted?
- What state or territory has issued you a driver's license, any other license or identification card?
- Where is your motor vehicle registered?
- Where is your home or home of record?
- What state or territory are you from?
- Where did you live before coming here?
- Where did you live immediately before leaving the United States?
- Where does your family live?

- Where do your parents live?
- Where do you own property?
- Where do you engage in any businesses?
- Where do you have bank accounts?
- Where are you a member of any organization?

3. Registering to Vote and Requesting a Ballot

In some states, registration may not be necessary to vote. If there is any doubt about registration status, the FVAP advises citizens to apply early for registration. Chapter 3 addresses specific registration requirements and information for each state and territory. The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is used as an absentee voter registration application and an absentee ballot application. (Section 5 provides an in-depth description of the FPCA and its use.)

A. Questions to Help Determine Current Registration Status

Voter registration can be affected or cancelled for several reasons: not voting for a period of time, changed residence since the last registration or election, changed name since the last registration or election, or changing political party preference since the last registration.

This set of questions should aid in the determination of current registration:

- Are you registered to vote?
- Where and when did you register?
- Where and when have you voted? (See Chapter 3 for state or territory provisions on cancellation of registration for not voting.)
- Have you changed your address since you last registered?
- Have you changed your name since you last registered or voted?
- Have you changed your party affiliation since you last registered?

The FVAP ombudsman service can help individuals by contacting their local election official for registration status.

B. Registration and Ballot Request

Persons who are away from their legal voting residence must follow the guidelines of their state or territory for voting absentee. Chapter 3 describes these requirements in detail. In addition, citizens and VAOs are urged to note deadlines carefully. These dates vary from state to state.

Consult Chapter 3 for the proper method to complete the FPCA to request registration and a ballot from each state and territory. See also Section 5 of this chapter for additional information on the FPCA.

C. State Special Write-In Absentee Ballot

Several states provide a state special write-in absentee ballot to assist citizens, such as submariners, missionaries, Peace Corps personnel and other individuals in extremely isolated areas, who know before the election they will be unable to use their state's regular absentee voting procedures due to lack of regular mail service. The state special write-in absentee ballot should not be confused with the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB - See Section 6).

The eligibility requirements for use of this ballot are set by the individual states. Generally, state special write-in absentee ballots include state, local, and Federal offices. States that provide a special write-in absentee ballot will include instructions for requesting these in Chapter 3. If an individual needs a state special write-in absentee ballot, use the FPCA to request it and, if available, use the stick-on labels provided in the state pages.

D. Other Ways to Obtain a Ballot and Vote

Proxy Procedure

Several states and territories allow individuals other than the prospective voter to act on the voter's behalf to register the voter and/or request an absentee ballot for the citizen; however, under no circumstance may a person cast a ballot on behalf of another person. Refer to the appropriate state or territory in Chapter 3 for more details.

In Person at the Polls

A citizen who is able to vote in person in his or her own district of legal residence should take advantage of the opportunity. Voting in person does not necessarily preclude registering by absentee process.

In some states, applying for an absentee ballot will not automatically rule out voting at the polls. A few states even permit someone who has already marked and returned an absentee ballot to vote in person, thereby nullifying the absentee ballot.

E. Electronic Transmission of Election Materials

Transmitting voting materials by mail may not allow for the timely receipt and return of materials. When such conditions exist, possibly preventing an individual from voting, electronic transmission (fax or email) may be a possible alternative. However, a VAO should first refer to Chapter 3 to determine if a state or territory permits faxing or emailing of official voting materials, and if so, which

voting materials a state or territory may allow to be electronically transmitted.

When faxing an application, voted ballot, or other election materials, the FVAP recommends use of one of its Electronic Transmission Service (ETS) numbers. These numbers are: **DSN (military) 223-5527; 1-800-368-8683; or (703) 693-5527** and the toll-free overseas fax numbers listed on the inside back cover. Overseas citizens with questions may reach the FVAP by using the international toll-free numbers listed on the inside back cover and on the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov.

Citizens should electronically transmit the FPCA or ballot in private. If a VAO's assistance is required, his or her role is to perform these duties in an official capacity and to protect the integrity of the electoral process and the confidentiality of the voter and his or her vote. Most states that permit electronic transmission of the voted ballot require the voter to sign a waiver of his or her right of a secret ballot.

Separate transmissions and/or cover sheets should be used for each FPCA or ballot sent. Also, after electronically transmitting, most states request that the citizen mail the completed FPCA or voted ballot to the local election official at the appropriate state or territory address listed in Chapter 3.

Appendix B explains the electronic transmission process in detail and contains a transmittal cover sheet which can be duplicated for use when transmitting election materials to election officials.

F. Late Registration

Many members of the U.S. Uniformed Services and overseas citizens go through a transition period when they first leave the Uniformed Services or return home from overseas employment and may not know where they will take up permanent residence. Others may move to a new location and not meet the state's residency requirements. Sometimes the date of discharge or return from overseas, and a state's registration requirement may disenfranchise a recently discharged military member, their eligible family members or overseas citizens. Some states have special procedures to allow these persons to register and vote.

In most of these cases, the registration is only valid for the next election.

Chapter 3 of this *Guide* includes information on those states which allow late registration. Each year states and territories pass legislation to facilitate voting by military members and overseas citizens. If the *Guide* does not indicate that the state or territory allows late registration, the citizen can check the on-line version of this *Guide* at www.fvap.gov or contact the local election official to see if the state or territorial laws have changed to allow late registration.

4. Casting a Vote

A. Marking and Mailing the Ballots

State or local election districts send the ballot with complete instructions for marking and returning the ballot. Frequently these instructions call for a procedure that requires the service of a VAO or other individual to act as a witness or notary.

Caution should be taken not to compromise the secrecy of the voter's ballot.

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B. Ballot Delays

The possibility exists that local election officials may not receive the necessary information to print ballots until close to election day. This causes delays in preparing and mailing absentee ballots to the citizen. One major cause of delay is litigation by candidates to be placed on the ballot or to remove an opponent's name from the ballot, or because of objections to the format of the ballot.

Through communication with state and local election officials, the FVAP is often able to anticipate which states or localities may not be able to mail ballots in a timely manner. This information and specific alternative instructions will be transmitted, as available, to voting assistance personnel via news releases.

C. Ballot Receipt and Late Counting

Some absentee ballots may arrive too late for the voter to execute the ballot, get it witnessed or notarized if required, and mail it to the local election official so that it arrives by the indicated deadlines. It is always advisable to vote the ballot and return it as soon as possible, even if the citizen believes it will not arrive in time to be counted. Some states and territories (see Chapter 3) allow for counting beyond election day if the ballot is signed or postmarked on or before the date of the election. If the citizen's state or territory is not among those that allow late counting, the citizen should mail the ballot anyway. The FVAP has initiated court actions in the past which required some states to count absentee ballots received past normal deadlines.

Whenever possible, especially for states and territories which allow late ballot counting, citizens should ask the postal clerk to hand stamp the envelope verifying the ballot's mailing date.

D. Voting In Person

Citizens who live within the United States may be able to register and vote where they live. This generally applies to eligible members of the U.S. Uniformed Services and their family members regardless of whether they live on or off a military installation. In short, any qualified person who can satisfy a state's or territory's legal residence requirement can register and vote in that state or jurisdiction.

NOTE: Registering to vote at a new place of legal residence will cancel the citizen's registration at the previous residence and may cause the voter to incur state or local tax liabilities at the new residence. For those who may be able to choose to vote absentee in one state or territory or in person in another, tax consequences and other legal effects of changing voting residence should be considered. Voters should consult legal counsel when making these decisions.

If stateside, the VAO should contact local election officials where the installation is located, have available telephone numbers and become familiar with local registration procedures in order to assist military and dependents who vote locally. The FVAP can provide contact information for these offices.

Many states and territories have systems of local mail registration. These states permit applicants to register by mailing a state prescribed form in lieu of in-person registration. Many of these forms are available online. The FVAP website (www.fvap.gov) has links to state and territory election web sites.

Some localities operate local mobile registration units as a convenience to citizens. Others expand registration opportunities through different methods. For additional information on registration in a particular community, citizens and voting assistance personnel may contact state or local election officials. VAOs at the department or agency level are also able to provide assistance in these matters.

5. The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) Standard Form 76

The FPCA is a postage-paid (within U.S. postal system, including APO and FPO addresses and U.S. Embassies and Consulates) postcard for use by absentee voters covered under the *UOCAVA*. The *UOCAVA* requires the design of a single postcard form to serve most states and territories both as an absentee voter registration application and an absentee ballot request (where registration is required). This section contains general guidelines and instructions for using the FPCA. (See Illustration of FPCA and Mailing Instructions at the end of this section.)

A. Where to Get it

FVAP prepositions the FPCA throughout the world at military bases, embassies and consulates, election organizations, and corporations. Most states and territories also accept the online FPCA (See OFPCA below) form which is available on the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov.

It is important to note that VAOs should order and stock four FPCAs for each citizen for whom they are responsible. By January 15th of each calendar year, FPCAs should be delivered in-hand to eligible voters and their voting age dependents. Remember to provide persons joining your organization during the year with an FPCA. In addition, FPCAs should be provided to citizens outside the U.S. by **August 15th** of even-numbered years and to citizens within the U.S. by **September 15th** of even-numbered years. Remind citizens to send in a new FPCA each time they move. FPCAs and other voting materials, should be available to you through your normal distribution channels. Your organization or Service Voting Action Officer will assist you with ordering these (See Introduction on page 1 for contact information).

B. Completing the FPCA

In order to register, and/or request an absentee ballot, an eligible U.S. citizen must carefully, legibly and accurately complete an FPCA and submit it to the proper election official. However, the extent and manner of FPCA usage is controlled by state and territory law and sometimes by local procedure. Because of varying state and territory procedures, the citizen should refer to their state requirements in Chapter 3 when completing the FPCA.

C. State and Local Treatment of the FPCA

In most states and territories, the FPCA serves as a valid request for registration and/or absentee ballot for those citizens entitled to use it regardless of whether they have registered prior to the submission of the FPCA. For such citizens, registration is either waived or considered accomplished upon submission of the FPCA requesting a ballot.

A few states may also require submission of their own registration form for permanent registration. Usually the local election official will send this form with the ballot. Refer to individual state procedures in Chapter 3.

D. Online FPCA (OFPCA)

The OFPCA is an alternative to the card stock FPCA. The OFPCA is provided as a convenience and as a time-saving alternative when the citizen cannot get the cardstock FPCA through other means and so that the citizen will not miss the opportunity to register or make timely request for a ballot. Unlike the postage-paid (in U.S. Mails including APO and FPO addresses) cardstock FPCA, users of the OFPCA must affix postage on the envelope before mailing the form. All states and territories, with the exception of American

Samoa and Guam, accept the OFPCA. If an OFPCA is sent to American Samoa or Guam, the application may not be processed.

The form can be filled-in online, printed out, signed, dated, placed in an envelope with the proper postage and mailed to the appropriate local election official. Additional instructions are included online.

Also available is a prepaid (in U.S. Mails including APO and FPO addresses) envelope template found online at www.fvap.gov. (See Section H, Mailing the FPCA)

E. Deadline for Submitting the FPCA

In about half the states and territories, the deadline for submitting the FPCA is the same for all those entitled to use it, regardless of whether or not the citizen is on the voter registration rolls for that state or territory. In the remainder of the states and territories there will be two deadlines: one for the registered voter to request a ballot and one for the nonregistered voter to register and request a ballot.

In the latter category of states, the nonregistered voter usually must submit the FPCA to the local election official by the state's or territory's deadline for voter registration (usually about 30 days prior to the election). The registered voter may have a later deadline for ballot request. The citizen should refer to his or her state or territory in Chapter 3 for further details.

Every registered citizen is strongly urged to submit the FPCA so that it is received by the election official at least 45 days prior to the election. Unregistered citizens are urged to submit the FPCA so that it arrives at least 60 days prior to the election. This helps to ensure timely delivery of the ballot to the citizen.

F. Submitting the FPCA

In all states and territories, one FPCA can be used to request both primary and general election ballots for Federal offices for an entire calendar year or longer. The *UOCAVA* has been amended to extend the effective period of the FPCA through two regularly scheduled general elections for Federal office. However, due to the transient nature of many *UOCAVA* citizens, **FVAP continues to recommend that each citizen submit an FPCA to their state of legal residence in January of each year** and again each time there is a change in the citizen's mailing address.

Some individuals may know they are returning to the states after a short period of time. The FPCA may be used to request ballots for 1) only the next election for federal offices, or 2) only one calendar year. Block 6 of the FPCA should be used to designate these requests.

Citizens and Voting Assistance Officers should carefully review the FPCA before submission to ensure that it is completed according to state guidelines, instructions and requirements in Chapter 3. Obtain a notary/witness

signature if the state requires it, read the Affirmation in Block 7 of the FPCA, and sign and date in the space provided. Citizens should also make sure that they are submitting the FPCA to the correct jurisdiction. Refer to “Where to Send It” in each state section in Chapter 3.

G. Electronic Transmission of the FPCA

Many states and territories allow the electronic transmission (faxing or emailing) of the FPCA under specific circumstances. Please check Chapter 3 to find out if this alternative is allowed by the state and follow additional instructions provided in Appendix B. Emailing instructions are often also provided on the state or county election website.

When faxing, the citizen should utilize the transmittal cover sheet provided in Appendix B. After the citizen has electronically transmitted the FPCA, he or she should immediately mail the original to the local election official using the address found at the end of each state section in Chapter 3, Section IV “Where to Send It”. See “Mailing the FPCA” below. Some states require the original FPCA to be on file for the ballot to be counted.

H. Mailing the FPCA

The citizen should mail the FPCA in sufficient time to comply with all state or territory registration/ballot request deadlines. The citizen should be certain that he/she allows enough time to receive, vote, and return an absentee ballot in time for it to be counted.

The FPCA does not require postage if mailed in the U.S. postal system, which includes all U.S. military post offices (APO/FPO) overseas as well as diplomatic pouches. Many Embassies and Consulates have access to U.S. military post offices or Diplomatic Post Office (DPO). Those that have access will accept the FPCA and give it to the U.S. military post office or DPO where it will be mailed with no postage required.

The FPCA may also be sent postage-free through the diplomatic pouch at Embassies and Consulates. However, the diplomatic pouch may not have a regular pick-up schedule. If the citizen is mailing election materials from overseas and does not have access to a U.S. Embassy/Consulate or an APO/FPO/DPO address, the citizen should affix the proper postage necessary to get the materials from that country into the U.S. postal system. Consular officers at Embassies or Consulates can provide mailing advice for citizens. (See FPCA Illustration and Mailing Instructions at the end of this section.)

In some cases it might be better to pay for either local country international mail or private air courier services. Private air couriers may not accept a Post Office Box number and may require a physical address of the local election official. If Chapter 3 does not list a physical

address for the citizen’s voting jurisdiction, the citizen may be able to obtain the physical address from the state election website (available through www.fvap.gov), or contact the local election official directly to obtain a physical addresses.

I. Problems Experienced in Processing FPCAs by Local Election Officials

Redesign of the FPCA and educational and training efforts have substantially reduced the incidence of FPCA processing problems encountered by local election officials. The most common issues cited by local election officials when processing the FPCA are:

- No signature
- No, or inadequate, voting residence address
- Illegible or inadequate mailing address (i.e., where the ballot is to be sent)
- Application sent to the incorrect jurisdiction
- Failure to indicate Party preference for primary elections
- Illegible handwriting
- FPCA received too late
- Required areas of FPCA not complete
- No Date-of-Birth given
- FPCA not witnessed or notarized (where required)

VAOs can help reduce these processing problems by advising citizens about the proper way to complete an FPCA. Local election officials must determine the citizen’s eligibility to vote based solely on information provided on the FPCA, and if there are questions or additional information required, they need enough time and the correct local country contact information (email, telephone, fax and/or mailing address) to resolve the issue.

Graphics Removed to Reduce Online File Size

J. Illustration of the FPCA and Mailing Instructions

The following pages illustrate the FPCA. Instructions for folding and mailing the FPCA are also included. Ensure that the citizen completes the FPCA following the instructions on the back of the form and especially the specific instructions provided by the state of legal residence in Chapter 3.

REGISTRATION AND ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUEST - FEDERAL POST CARD APPLICATION (FPCA)**1. I REQUEST ABSENTEE BALLOTS FOR ALL ELECTIONS IN WHICH I AM ELIGIBLE TO VOTE AND I AM (mark only one):**

- ☐ (a) A MEMBER OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES OR MERCHANT MARINE ON ACTIVE DUTY, OR AN ELIGIBLE SPOUSE OR DEPENDENT
- ☐ (b) A U.S. CITIZEN RESIDING OUTSIDE THE U.S. TEMPORARILY
- ☐ (c) A U.S. CITIZEN RESIDING OUTSIDE THE U.S. INDEFINITELY

2. MY INFORMATION (Required)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---------|--|------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| a. TYPED OR PRINTED NAME (Last, First, Middle) | | | | | | | | | | SUFFIX (Jr., Sr., III, etc.) | | b. PREVIOUS NAME (if applicable) | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. SEX | | d. RACE | | e. DATE OF BIRTH | | | | f. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER | | | | g. STATE DRIVER'S LICENSE OR I.D. NUMBER | | | | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F | | | | M M D D Y Y Y Y | | | | - - | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| h. TELEPHONE NUMBER (No DSN number; include all international prefixes) | | | | | | | | | | i. FAX NUMBER (No DSN number; include all international prefixes) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| j. EMAIL ADDRESS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3. MY VOTING RESIDENCE ADDRESS (For military, use legal residence. For overseas citizens, use last legal residence in U.S.) (Required)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|-------------|--|
| a. NUMBER AND STREET (Cannot be a P.O. Box) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. CITY, TOWN OR VILLAGE | | | | | | | | | | c. COUNTY | | | | | | | | | | d. STATE | | e. ZIP CODE | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

4. WHERE TO SEND MY VOTING MATERIALS

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------|--|
| a. MY CURRENT ADDRESS (Where I live now) (Required) | | | | | | | | | | b. MY FORWARDING ADDRESS (Complete 4.b. only if you do not want your ballot mailed to the address in Block 4.a.) | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. I PREFER TO RECEIVE MY ABSENTEE BALLOT, AS PERMITTED BY MY STATE, BY: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> MAIL | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> FAX | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> EMAIL | |

5. MY POLITICAL PARTY PREFERENCE (Optional, but may be required by states to register to vote in primary elections):**6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Designate the period for which you want to receive ballots — see instructions for Block 6 paragraph (3). Consult the Voting Assistance Guide for other specific state instructions.)**

7. AFFIRMATION (Required)

I swear or affirm, under penalty of perjury, that:

1. I am a member of the Uniformed Services or merchant marine on active duty or an eligible spouse or dependent of such a member, or a U.S. citizen temporarily residing outside the U.S., or other U.S. citizen residing outside the U.S., and
2. I am a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age (or will be by the day of the election), eligible to vote in the requested jurisdiction, and
3. I have not been convicted of a felony or other disqualifying offense or been adjudicated mentally incompetent, or if so, my voting rights have been reinstated, and
4. I am not registering, requesting a ballot, or voting in any other jurisdiction in the U.S., and
5. My signature and date below indicate when I completed this document, and
6. The information on this form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

I understand that a material misstatement of fact in completion of this document may constitute grounds for conviction of perjury.

Signed: _____ Date:

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |
| M | M | D | D | Y | Y | Y | Y |

 Signed: _____ Date:

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |
| M | M | D | D | Y | Y | Y | Y |

FPCA, SF 76, Rev. 2005

(Witness/Notary and address (if

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

AUTHORITY: 42 USC 1973ff, "Title 1 - Registration and Voting By Absentee Uniformed Services Voters and Overseas Voters in Elections for Federal Office."

PRINCIPAL PURPOSE: Serves as an application for registration and/or request for absentee ballot for all persons covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

DISCLOSURE: Voluntary; however, failure to provide the necessary information may keep the pertinent jurisdiction from processing this request and may prevent you from voting absentee.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION.

Please use the Voting Assistance Guide for specific state-by-state information when completing this form. Type or print legibly. Assistance and information regarding the use and completion of this form, as well as specific state information may be obtained from military Unit Voting Assistance Officers, U.S. Embassy and Consular Voting Assistance Officers, or organizations of U.S. citizens overseas and <http://www.fvap.gov>.

Block 1. Place an X only in one block. Marking 1(c) generally means that you were a resident of that state before departing the U.S. and your intent to return at some time in the future is uncertain. Marking block 1(c) applies for a Federal ballot only (if one is printed by the state).

Block 2. MY INFORMATION. Block 2d. RACE. This information is requested from some states for statistical purposes by the Department of Justice in their enforcement of the Voting Rights Act and the National Voter Registration Act. See *Voting Assistance Guide*.

Block 3. MY VOTING RESIDENCE ADDRESS. Enter the complete legal voting residence address (including county) where you ACTUALLY LIVED in the state or territory. Your right to vote in your state and determination of your voting precinct depend on the physical location of your residence while you were in the state. DO NOT USE A POST OFFICE BOX NUMBER. In an area with no street names, indicate route name and number and box number. Also provide any additional information necessary to physically describe your residence location. If you have never lived in the U.S., check the *Voting Assistance Guide* for the states that allow you to vote using a parent's voting residence.

Block 4. WHERE TO SEND MY VOTING MATERIALS. Block 4a is the complete mailing address where you are now living. If you have an alternate address or an address of a mail forwarding service that delivers your mail more quickly, enter that address in Block 4b. If your state allows absentee ballots to be sent via e-mail or fax, check the appropriate box in Block 4c. See *Voting Assistance Guide*. **This form should be resubmitted every time you change your mailing address.**

Block 5. MY POLITICAL PARTY PREFERENCE. This is an optional entry, however, this information is required by most states in order to vote in primary elections. Consult the Voting Assistance Guide for any specific state information required.

Block 6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

- (1) Provide any information that may assist the local election official in approving this application. It would be helpful if you provide the date you last lived at the address in Block 3a. and if you list a name and telephone number of a local contact in the event the local election official cannot contact you and has a question concerning the application.
- (2) If you were previously registered to vote in a jurisdiction other than the one in which you are applying, indicate "previously registered in (location)."
- (3) Submission of this form serves as a request to receive ballots for all Federal elections held through the next two regularly scheduled general elections. If you do not wish to receive ballots for that length of time, you may request a ballot for each election for Federal office held in the next election year OR a ballot for only the next scheduled election for Federal office by noting your choice in Block 6. (Depending on your state of residence, you may also receive ballots for State and local offices during the selected period as well.)
- (4) If your state provides a special state write-in ballot and you are requesting one, indicate the reason you are requesting a special write-in ballot or place a sticker from the *Voting Assistance Guide* in this section.

Block 7. AFFIRMATION. Ensure that you read the oath, sign, and enter the date you completed the form in the spaces provided. **Not all states require a witness or notary, and state laws vary regarding the voting of convicted felons. Consult your state section of the Voting Assistance Guide or your Voting Assistance Officer for your state's requirements.**

MAILING INSTRUCTIONS. Fold and seal using the adhesive tabs so that the local election official's address is on the outside. DO NOT STAPLE.

(fold to outside)

FROM:

(Voter name and current complete military or overseas mailing address)

MAILING ENVELOPE:

International airmail postage is required if not mailed in the U.S. Postal System or APO/FPO System, or Diplomatic Pouch.



U.S. Postage Paid
39 USC 3406



PAR AVION

OFFICIAL ABSENTEE BALLOTING MATERIAL - FIRST CLASS MAIL

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IN THE U.S. MAIL - DMM 703.8.0

TO:

FPCA Mailing Instructions

Complete and sign the FPCA form following the specific state requirements in Chapter 3.

Then...
Turn the FPCA over and,

Place current mailing
address here

Address FPCA to correct local election official as indicated in the citizen's state of residence in Chapter 3.

Then...
Turn the FPCA over again and,

Fold the form as indicated.

- Then...remove the strips to expose adhesive and seal the FPCA on three sides. **Do not use staples.**

Then mail.

6. The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) Standard Form 186

The FWAB (Standard Form 186) is a backup “emergency” ballot available for citizens covered under the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*.

In most cases the FWAB is only used to vote for Federal offices (President/Vice President, U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, Delegate or Resident Commissioner) in general elections.

This backup ballot is valid only when all criteria for its use have been met. Specific criteria for use of the FWAB is included here. (See Illustration of FWAB and Mailing Instructions at the end of this section.)

The FWAB should not be confused with the special write-in absentee ballot provided by some states. The state write-in ballot is generally voted early, usually 90 to 180 days before the election (See Section 3.C) and includes state offices. On the other hand, the FWAB is a Federal form voted only by *UOCAVA* citizens who have already requested and have not received their regular state ballot before the election.

A. Where to get it

FVAP prepositions the FWAB throughout the world at military bases, embassies and consulates, election organizations, and corporations. It is also available on-line (OFWAB) for downloading at www.fvap.gov. (See Section 6. F below.)

It is important to note that VAOs should order and stock one FWAB for each citizen for whom they are responsible. FWABs and other voting materials, should be available to you through your normal distribution channels. Your organization or Service Voting Action Officer will assist you with ordering these (See Introduction on page 1 for contact information).

B. Conditions for Using the FWAB

The FWAB can be used by *UOCAVA* citizens in general elections for Federal offices under three very specific conditions. To be eligible for this ballot, a citizen must:

1. Be a member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine (or eligible family member), or a U.S. citizen overseas (includes APO/FPO addresses) who is absent from the place of residence where he or she is otherwise qualified to vote during the general election,
2. Apply for a regular ballot, using the FPCA (See Section 5) or other application allowed by state law, early enough so that the appropriate local election official **receives** the request at least 30 days before the election or before the ballot request deadline established by the state, whichever is later.

3. Not have received the requested regular absentee ballot from the state.

These provisions apply to all the states, the District of Columbia, and the four U.S. territories covered by *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA* Appendix A). Refer to the FVAP website or contact FVAP for further information.

C. Recommendations for Submitting the FWAB

FVAP recommends that *overseas* citizens who have not received their requested state absentee ballot by the 25th day before the election, complete and submit the FWAB to their state local election official if they have met each of the above requirements (See “Conditions for Using the FWAB” Section 6.B). For *stateside* Uniformed Service members and their families, FVAP recommends submitting the FWAB 10 days before the election. This will help to ensure timely receipt of their absentee ballot for Federal offices.

The FWAB must be received by the local election official not later than the deadline for receipt of regular state absentee ballots for that election under state or territory law.

Citizens who receive their regular state absentee ballot after submitting the FWAB should vote and return the ballot immediately. If a citizen’s regular state absentee ballot arrives by the deadline for receipt of absentee ballots, the state will count the regular state absentee ballot instead of the FWAB, as it will usually include more offices. The ballot must be signed, dated and postmarked by the day of the election.

Citizens should carefully review the FWAB before submission to ensure that the absentee ballot complies with state’s guidelines, instructions and requirements. Citizens should also make sure that they are submitting the FWAB to the correct jurisdiction. Refer to the end of each state section in Chapter 3, Section IV “Where to Send It.” Obtain a notary/witness signature if the state requires it, and sign and date the Voter’s Declaration Affirmation.

FVAP encourages the citizen to always vote and return their regular state ballot regardless of its receipt date (up to and including election day) because a state may allow late counting of these ballots from overseas citizens.

D. Voter’s Declaration/Affirmation Completion Instructions

In order for the FWAB to be processed by the local election official, an eligible U.S. citizen must carefully and accurately complete the Voter’s Declaration Affirmation before submitting it to the proper election official. However, the extent and manner of Voter’s Declaration Affirmation usage is controlled by state and territory law and sometimes by local procedure.

Type or print all information in dark (black preferred) ink. Fill in all required items in accordance with the instructions attached to the FWAB. Ensure that the required entries (shaded areas on the FPCA form found at the start of each section in Chapter 3) and any additional FWAB instructions for that state are completed on the FWAB Voter's Declaration Affirmation. (See FWAB Illustration and Mailing Instructions at the end of this section.)

The FWAB is an official absentee ballot - therefore the citizen must sign and date the Voter's Declaration Affirmation. If required by the state or territory, the citizen must sign and date in the presence of a notary or witness being careful not to compromise the secrecy of the ballot (See individual state requirements in Chapter 3.)

E. Completing the FWAB

The FWAB should be used when the election is rapidly approaching and insufficient time exists for the citizen to receive, vote and return their requested state ballot on time.

The FWAB includes complete instructions for marking and returning the ballot. If the voter requires the service of a VAO or other individual, caution should be taken not to compromise the voter's right to the secrecy of the ballot.

If eligible to use this ballot, the citizen may indicate their election choices for Federal offices in the general election. To vote this blank write-in ballot, the citizens may vote for a candidate by writing in the candidate's name or writing in the name of a party affiliation (if the intention of a voter can be ascertained, the candidate/party choices will be accepted).

The FWAB is similar to state absentee ballots as it includes a security envelope for the voted ballot and a transmittal (mailing) envelope.

The citizen should place only the voted ballot inside the security envelope and not write on the outside of the security envelope. (See FWAB Illustration and Mailing Instructions at the end of this section.)

To successfully vote and return a ballot, citizens must comply with ballot return deadlines and postmark requirements. Correctly meeting all requirements and deadlines will help ensure the ballot arrives in time to be counted for each general election. Refer to the "Casting Your Vote" section for each state in Chapter 3 for deadlines.

F. Online FWAB (OFWAB)

The OFWAB is an online alternative to the FWAB. The same conditions that apply for using the FWAB apply to the OFWAB (See Section 6.B). The OFWAB is being provided as a convenience and as a time-saving alternative when the citizen cannot get the FWAB through other means and so that the citizen will not miss the opportunity to vote. Unlike the postage-paid (in U.S. Mails including APO and FPO addresses) FWAB, users of the OFWAB must affix postage

on the envelope before mailing the form. All states and territories accept the OFWAB.

The FWAB instructions in this section must be followed when using the OFWAB. The OFWAB Voter's Declaration Affirmation can be filled in online but must be printed out, signed, dated, placed in a mailing envelope along with the security envelope containing the voted ballot with the proper postage and mailed to the appropriate local election official. Additional instructions are included online. Further Instructions for using the online form are provided at www.fvap.gov.

Also available is a prepaid (in U.S. Mails including APO and FPO addresses) envelope template found online at www.fvap.gov.

G. Electronic Transmission of the FWAB

Some states (or territories) allow the electronic transmission (faxing or emailing) of the voted absentee ballot under specific circumstances. If so, the voted FWAB may also be transmitted electronically. Please check Chapter 3 to find out if this is accepted by the state and follow additional instructions provided in Appendix B. Emailing instructions are often also provided on the state or county election website.

When faxing, the citizen should utilize the transmittal cover sheet provided in Appendix B, along with the Voter's Declaration Affirmation and the voted ballot.

After the citizen has electronically transmitted the voted ballot (FWAB), he or she should immediately mail the original to the local election official using the address found at the end of each state section in Chapter 3, Section IV "Where to Send It." See "Mailing the FWAB" below.

H. Mailing the FWAB

The citizen should vote and mail the FWAB if it is nearing election day and there is not enough time to receive and return his or her regular state ballot to the local election official to meet the official state or territory deadline for receipt of the ballot. (See "Recommendations for Submitting the FWAB, Section C.")

The FWAB does not require postage if mailed in the U.S. postal system, which includes all U.S. military post offices (APO/FPO) overseas as well as diplomatic pouches. Many Embassies and Consulates have access to U.S. military post offices or Diplomatie Post Office (DPO). Those that have access will accept the FWAB and give it to the U.S. military post office or DPO where it will be mailed with no postage required.

The FWAB may also be sent postage-free through the diplomatic pouch at Embassies and Consulates. However, the diplomatic pouch may not have a regular pick-up schedule. The citizen should contact the Embassy/Consulate VAO to find out the best method to mail the

FWAB from their location or when the last diplomatic pouch delivery will be made prior to an election. If the citizen is mailing election materials from overseas and does not have access to a U.S. Embassy/Consulate or an APO/FPO/DPO address, he or she should affix the proper postage necessary to get the materials from that country into the U.S. Postal System. To ensure timely delivery it might be quicker to utilize either international mail or private air courier services. (See FWAB Illustration and Mailing Instructions at the end of this section.)

Important Note: When mailing the voted ballot, the citizen should, if possible, ask the mail clerk to hand stamp the ballot envelope so that a date is clearly visible. The dated postmark will help ensure that the local election official can make a proper determination of timely mailing. Generally, if a state allows late counting of ballots, the ballot envelope must have been signed and dated, or postmarked on or before election day.

I. Some States Have Expanded the Use of the FWAB

Currently, the FWAB is prescribed by Federal law for use in general elections for Federal offices only. One of FVAP's recommended legislative best practices for state governments is to expand the use of the FWAB.

Some states have expanded the use of the FWAB by allowing Uniformed Service members and overseas citizens to use the FWAB in elections other than general elections or for offices other than Federal offices.

Some states have also expanded the use of the FWAB by accepting the FWAB as a simultaneous registration form and voted ballot. For more information on this and other legislative best practices please visit the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov and select "Legislative Initiatives."

In addition to the instructions set forth in this chapter, it is important that citizens be aware of additional instructions provided by their state or territory when completing the FWAB. To learn more about the states that have adopted this legislative best practice and how it is implemented see specific state by state instructions in Chapter 3 or visit the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov.

Under certain circumstances the FVAP may enter into an *ad hoc* agreement with a state or take legal action to allow expanded use of the FWAB for a specific election. The FVAP will notify VAOs and the citizens regarding any changes to the parameters governing the use of the FWAB through the *Voting Information News* and voting news releases. These are also available on the FVAP website.

J. Reasons Why the FWAB May Not Be Counted

Unless provided by state law, or special provisions have been made, the FWAB will not be counted if:

- It was submitted from within the United States* from persons other than members of the Uniformed Services or the Merchant Marines (or eligible family members) absent from their voting jurisdiction; or
- The voter's application for a regular absentee ballot was received by the local election official less than 30 days prior to the election, or later than required by state law for receipt of ballot request; or
- The state also receives a properly cast regular state absentee ballot from the voter by the state deadline for counting; or
- It is not received by the local election official by the state deadline for counting; or
- The transmittal envelope is not signed and dated, and the required witness or notary signatures are not included (see state requirements in Chapter 3).

*An APO/FPO address is considered outside the U.S.

It is very important for voters to request their absentee ballot as early as possible. FVAP suggests applying by submitting the FPCA (Section 5) in January each year to ensure that all ballots for all elections held that year will be received in a timely manner.

K. Illustration of the FWAB and Mailing Instructions

The following pages illustrates the FWAB and its components. Instructions for mailing the FWAB are also included. Ensure that the citizen completes the FWAB following the instructions included with the form and especially the specific instructions provided by the state of legal residence in Chapter 3.

The FWAB consists of the following (as illustrated in the subsequent pages):

- Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot Instructions
- Voter's Declaration/Affirmation
- Official Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot with Security Envelope attached
- Mailing Envelope

FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT INSTRUCTIONS

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

AUTHORITY: 42 USC 1973ff, "Title 1 - Registration and Voting By Absent Uniformed Services Voters and Overseas Voters in Elections for Federal Office."

PRINCIPAL PURPOSE: Serves as a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot for general elections or other elections provided by law or special provisions for all persons covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*.

DISCLOSURE: Voluntary; however failure to furnish requested personal information may result in the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot not being recognized and therefore not counted.

Please read instructions before completion. If you have any questions, consult your Unit Voting Assistance Officer or Embassy/Consulate Voting Assistance Officer, the *Voting Assistance Guide*, or <http://www.fvap.gov>. Type or print legibly.

1. INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE VOTER'S DECLARATION/AFFIRMATION:

Block 1.b. Some states may accept the Voter's Declaration/Affirmation as a registration form if you have not registered previously in this jurisdiction. See the *Voting Assistance Guide*. For those states that do not accept the Voter's Declaration/Affirmation as a request form and you have not previously submitted a Federal Post Card Application, your ballot may not be counted.

Block 2. MY INFORMATION. Item 2d. RACE. This information is requested from some states for statistical purposes by the Department of Justice in its enforcement of the Voting Rights Act and the National Voter Registration Act.

Block 3. MY VOTING RESIDENCE ADDRESS. Enter the complete legal voting residence address where you ACTUALLY LIVED in the state or territory. Your right to vote in your state and determination of your voting precinct depend on the physical location of your residence while you were in the state. DO NOT USE A POST OFFICE BOX NUMBER. In an area with no street names, indicate route name and number and box number. Also provide any additional information necessary to physically describe your residence location. This voting residence address must be the same as the voting residence on the application for your regular absentee ballot previously submitted.

Block 4. WHERE TO SEND MY VOTING MATERIALS.

Block 4a. Enter the complete mailing address where you are now living. **Block 4b.** If you have an alternate address or an address of a mail forwarding service that delivers your mail more quickly, enter that address here.

Block 5. MY POLITICAL PARTY PREFERENCE. This is an optional entry, however, this information is required by most states in order to vote in primary elections. Consult the *Voting Assistance Guide* for any specific state information required.

Block 6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. Provide any information that may assist the local election official in accepting this ballot or application.

Block 7. AFFIRMATION. Ensure that you read the oath, sign, and enter the date you completed the form in the spaces provided. Not all states require a witness or notary, and state laws vary regarding the voting of convicted felons. Consult your state section of the *Voting Assistance Guide* or your Voting Assistance Officer for your state's requirements.

2. INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING THE OFFICIAL FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT:

a. For each office for which you vote, write in either a candidate's name or political party designation. If your state permits, you may vote for other offices in the spaces provided under the "ADDENDUM" section.

b. Once the ballot is complete, fold and place it in the Security Envelope and seal. **PLACE ONLY THE VOTED BALLOT IN THE SECURITY ENVELOPE AND DO NOT WRITE ON THE SECURITY ENVELOPE.**

c. Insert the sealed Security Envelope and the Voter's Declaration/Affirmation into the Mailing Envelope and seal.

d. This absentee balloting material is Postage Paid if mailed in the U.S. Mail, APO/FPO, or Diplomatic Pouch. If mailed in a foreign postal system, international airmail postage must be affixed. In the return address section in the upper left hand corner of the mailing envelope, enter your name and current complete military or overseas mailing address. In the "TO" section in the center of the mailing envelope, enter the name and mailing address of your city, township, village, county or state election official. Consult the *Voting Assistance Guide* for correct address. This must be the same election official where you sent your application for an absentee ballot.

e. Some states allow the electronic transmission of FWABs. Consult the *Voting Assistance Guide* for your state or territory's procedures.

VOTER's DECLARATION/AFFIRMATION - FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT (FWAB)**1.a. I AM (mark only one):**

- ☐ A MEMBER OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES OR MERCHANT MARINE ON ACTIVE DUTY, OR AN ELIGIBLE SPOUSE OR DEPENDENT
- ☐ A U.S. CITIZEN RESIDING OUTSIDE THE U.S. TEMPORARILY
- ☐ A U.S. CITIZEN RESIDING OUTSIDE THE U.S. INDEFINITELY

1.b. I ALSO REQUEST VOTER REGISTRATION (where permitted) ☐**2. MY INFORMATION (Required)**

a. TYPED OR PRINTED NAME (Last, First, Middle)

SUFFIX (Jr., Sr., III,
etc.)

b. PREVIOUS NAME (if applicable)

c. SEX

☐ M ☐ F

d. RACE

e. DATE OF BIRTH

M M D D Y Y Y Y

f. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

g. STATE DRIVER'S LICENSE OR I.D. NUMBER

h. TELEPHONE NUMBER (No DSN number; include all international prefixes)

i. FAX NUMBER (No DSN number; include all international prefixes)

j. EMAIL ADDRESS

3. MY VOTING RESIDENCE ADDRESS (For military, use legal residence. For overseas citizens, use last legal residence in U.S.) (Required)

a. NUMBER AND STREET (Cannot be a P.O. Box)

b. CITY, TOWN OR VILLAGE

c. COUNTY

d. STATE

e. ZIP CODE

4. WHERE TO SEND MY VOTING MATERIALS

a. MY CURRENT ADDRESS (Where I live now) (Required)

b. MY FORWARDING ADDRESS (Complete 4b only if you do not want your ballot mailed to the address in Block 4a.)

5. MY POLITICAL PARTY PREFERENCE (Optional, but may be required by states to register to vote in primary elections):**6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Designate the period for which you want to receive future ballots. See instructions. Consult your state pages of the Voting Assistance Guide for other additional information requested.)****7. AFFIRMATION (Required)**

I swear or affirm, under penalty of perjury, that:

1. I am a member of the Uniformed Services or merchant marine on active duty or an eligible spouse or dependent of such a member, or a U.S. citizen temporarily residing outside the U.S., or other U.S. citizen residing outside the U.S., and
2. I am a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age (or will be by the day of the election), eligible to vote in the requested jurisdiction, and
3. I have not been convicted of a felony or other disqualifying offense or been adjudicated mentally incompetent, or if so, my voting rights have been reinstated, and
4. I am not registering, requesting a ballot, or voting in any other jurisdiction in the U.S., and
5. My application for a regular absentee ballot was mailed in time to be received by the local election official 30 days prior to this election, or the state deadline, whichever is later, and
6. I have not received the requested ballot, and
7. I understand that if my regular absentee ballot is received by the local election official in time to be counted, that ballot will be counted and this write-in ballot will be voided, and
8. I have voted and sealed this ballot in private and have not allowed any person to observe the marking of this ballot, except for those authorized to assist voters under state or Federal law and I have not been influenced, and
9. I am a Uniformed Services member, or dependent, who is absent from my voting jurisdiction, or I am an overseas citizen and have submitted this ballot from outside the U.S., or my state has made special provisions to allow me to mail this ballot inside the U.S., and
10. My signature and date below indicate when I completed this document, and
11. The information on this form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

I understand that a material misstatement of fact in completion of this document may constitute grounds for conviction of perjury.

Signed: _____

Date:

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Signed: _____
(Witness/Notary and address (if required))Date:

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| M | M | D | D | Y | Y | Y | Y |

OFFICIAL FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT

PRESIDENT/VICE PRESIDENT

U.S. SENATOR*

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE/DELEGATE**/RESIDENT COMMISSIONER**

* Legal residents of the District of Columbia may vote only for President/Vice President and Delegate.

** Legal residents of American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands may vote only for Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress.

ADDENDUM

Some states allow the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot to be used by military and overseas civilian voters in elections other than general elections or for offices other than Federal offices. Consult your state section in the *Voting Assistance Guide* to determine your state's policy. *If you are eligible to use this ballot to vote for offices/ candidates other than those listed above*, please indicate in the spaces provided below, the office for which you wish to vote (for example: Governor, Attorney General, Mayor, State Senator, etc.), and the name and/or party affiliation of the candidate for whom you wish to vote.

OFFICE

CANDIDATE NAME or PARTY AFFILIATION

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Standard Form 186 (Rev. 2005)

(Use reverse side for additional space)

(Separate here)

OFFICIAL FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT

SECURITY ENVELOPE

(ONLY PUT VOTED BALLOT INSIDE THIS ENVELOPE)

Standard Form 186 (Rev. 2005)

OFFICIAL FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT (*CONTINUATION*)

OFFICE

CANDIDATE NAME or PARTY AFFILIATION

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Standard Form 186 (Rev. 2005)

(Separate here)

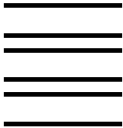
Security envelope - DO NOT WRITE ON THIS ENVELOPE

FROM:

(Voter name and current complete military or overseas mailing address)

MAILING ENVELOPE:

International airmail postage is required if not mailed in the U.S. Postal System or APO/FPO System, or Diplomatic Pouch.



U.S. Postage Paid
39 USC 3406



PAR AVION

OFFICIAL ABSENTEE BALLOTING MATERIAL - FIRST CLASS MAIL

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IN THE U.S. MAIL - DMM 703.8.0

TO:

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTER

BEFORE YOU SEAL THIS MAILING ENVELOPE, CHECK THAT YOU HAVE DONE THE FOLLOWING:

- ☐ 1. Complete the Voter's Declaration/Affirmation.
- ☐ 2. Check the *Voting Assistance Guide* to see if your state requires a Witness or Notary on the voted ballot.
- ☐ 3. Sign and date the Voter's Declaration/Affirmation and put inside this Mailing Envelope.
- ☐ 4. Vote your Ballot.
- ☐ 5. Put your voted Ballot in the Security Envelope, remove tape and seal Security Envelope.
- ☐ 6. Put the sealed Security Envelope in this Mailing Envelope.
- ☐ 7. Remove tape and seal this Mailing Envelope.
- ☐ 8. Put your name and current complete military or overseas mailing address in the "FROM" section.
- ☐ 9. Put address of proper election official in the "TO" section of this envelope. This address must be the same local election official address where you previously submitted your regular absentee ballot application.

NOW YOU ARE READY TO MAIL THIS ENVELOPE!

INSTRUCTIONS TO ELECTION OFFICIALS

This is an official Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) authorized by 42 USC 1973 ff-2.

1. Upon receipt of this ballot, examine the voter's declaration. If it appears that the voter is eligible to vote in your jurisdiction and has applied in a timely fashion for a regular absentee ballot, or this requirement has been waived by appropriate authority, then this ballot is valid unless you receive the voted regular absentee ballot in time for it to be counted. This ballot should be handled in the same manner as required by state law for other absentee ballots. If this ballot is to be counted, deposit the voted ballot in the ballot box without examining the voter's choice.
2. The oath on this ballot is self-executing and need not be notarized or witnessed, unless required by state law.
3. Unless provided by law, or special provisions have been made, this ballot **should not be counted** if:
 - a. It was submitted by a member of the Uniformed Services (or eligible dependent) not absent from his or her voting jurisdiction; or
 - b. It was submitted from within the United States (an APO/FPO address is considered outside the U.S.) by a citizen who is neither a Uniformed Services member, member of the Merchant Marine, or a dependent of a Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine member; or
 - c. This voter's application for a regular absentee ballot was received by you less than 30 days prior to the election, or later than required by state law for receipt of application, whichever is later; or
 - d. You received this voter's completed regular absentee ballot by the state deadline for receipt of absentee ballots; or
 - e. This ballot is not received by the state deadline for receipt of voted absentee ballots.
 - f. This person's request for an absentee ballot has not been received.

FWAB Mailing Instructions

Step 1

Read FWAB instructions carefully.
Complete the Voter's Declaration/
Affirmation. Have it witnessed/notarized if
required. Sign and date it.

Step 2

Fold the Voter's Declaration/Affirmation and insert into the Mailing Envelope.

Step 3

Vote your ballot by writing in your candidate
or party of choice on the appropriate line on
the Official Federal Write-In Absentee
Ballot

Step 4

Detach the ballot from the Security Envelope. Fold and insert into the Security Envelope and seal.

Step 5

Insert the sealed Security Envelope into the Mailing Envelope.

Step 6

Address the Mailing Envelope to the proper city, town or county voting official.

Step 7

Write in your mailing address.

Step 8

Before mailing, use voter checklist on Mailing Envelope.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

OFFICIAL FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT

SECURITY ENVELOPE

(ONLY PUT VOTED BALLOT INSIDE THIS ENVELOPE)



Standard Form 1046 (Rev. 10/95)

Securely enciphered - DO NOT WRITE ON THIS DISK (IDE)

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| <p>OFFICIAL FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT</p> | | <p>4</p> |
| <p>OFFICIAL FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT</p> | | |
| <p><u>SECURITY ENVELOPE</u></p> | | |
| <p>(ONLY PUT VOTED BALLOT INSIDE THIS ENVELOPE)</p> | | |

Standard Form 100 (Rev. 2002)

[illegible]

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| FROM: (Enter name and address) | |  | | <div>U.S. Postage Paid 39 USC 3406</div> |
| <div>7</div> | |  | | <div>PAR AVION</div> |
| MAILING ENVELOPE: International airmail postage is required if not mailed in the U.S. Postal System or AIRCFO System, or Diplomatic Pouch. | | | | |
| <div>OFFICIAL ABSENTEE BALLOTING MATERIAL - FIRST CLASS MAIL</div> | | | | |
| NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF THE U.S. MAIL - DMN 703.8.0 | | | | |
| TO: | | <div>6</div> | | |

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| <p>2</p> <p>Voter's Declaration/Affirmation</p> | |
| <p>AL FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT</p> <p>5</p> <p><u>SECURITY ENVELOPE</u></p> | |
| <p>PUT VOTED BALLOT INSIDE THIS ENVELOPE</p> | |

Do not use staples!